

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended): A hollow plastic bottle, which comprises:
a hollow body of thermoplastic material having a generally cylindrical side wall, an upper end with a dispensing opening therein, and a lower supporting base with an inwardly extending portion;
said side wall including a plurality of circumferentially spaced apart, vacuum panels and a plurality of elongated posts positioned between the panels;
top and bottom elongated recessed cylindrical bands above and below said vacuum panels;
and wherein said bottom elongated band extends continuously around the circumference of said bottle, and wherein said top elongated band includes at least two spaced apart discontinuities comprising raised portions each of which interrupts the continuity of the top band, wherein said discontinuities are each positioned over the central portion of an adjacent vacuum panel and the top band extends over the major portion of said adjacent vacuum panel, and wherein more uniform flexing is provided in the vacuum panels.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (canceled)

Claim 4 (currently amended): A bottle according to ~~claim 3~~ claim 1 , including two of said discontinuities spaced 180° apart.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A bottle according to ~~claim 2~~, claim 1, including a generally dome shaped portion located between the upper end and side wall.

Claim 6 (original): A bottle according to claim 5, including six of said spaced apart vacuum panels.

Claim 7 (original): A bottle according to claim 6, wherein said elongated posts comprise smooth, vertically elongated land areas which space apart each vacuum panel from each other.

Claim 8 (original): A bottle according to claim 1, wherein each vacuum panel includes an inwardly offset peripheral portion.

Claim 9 (original): A bottle according to claim 8, wherein said inwardly offset peripheral portion surrounds two central, outwardly extending vertical portions separated by a depressed portion.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A bottle according to claim 9, wherein said inwardly offset peripheral portion has a curved surface and wherein the depressed portion is located centrally on said vacuum portions.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A bottle according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, including single top and bottom recessed bands and a label mounting area covering said vacuum panels and top and bottom recessed bands.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A bottle according to ~~claim 2~~, claim 1, including an inwardly extending central portion of the base, a peripheral base rim to support the bottle when standing, and radially extending, outwardly disposed spokes extending between the central portion of the base and the peripheral rim.

Claim 13 (canceled)

Claim 14 (currently amended): A bottle according to ~~claim 2~~, claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic material is polyethylene terephthalate.

Claim 15 (original): A bottle according to claim 1, wherein said bottle is a hot fill container.

Claim 16 (canceled)

Claim 17 (previously presented): A hollow plastic bottle, which comprises:
a hollow body of thermoplastic material having a generally cylindrical side wall, an upper end with a dispensing opening therein, and a lower supporting base with an inwardly extending portion;
said side wall including a plurality of circumferentially spaced apart, vacuum panels and a plurality of elongated posts positioned between the panels;
top and bottom recessed cylindrical bands above and below said vacuum panels;
and wherein said bottom band extends continuously around the circumference of said bottle, wherein said top band includes at least two spaced apart discontinuities comprising raised portions each of which interrupts the continuity of the top band, wherein the bottle includes a parting line and wherein the discontinuities are each 90° from the parting line.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A bottle according to claim 5, including a recessed portion between the dome shaped portion and the side wall.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A bottle according to claim 18, including a shoulder with a lower edge beneath the recessed portion.

Claim 20 (previously presented): A bottle according to claim 19, wherein the lower edge of the shoulder defines an upper label bumper, and an upper edge of the base defines a lower label bumper.

Claim 21 (previously presented): A bottle according to claim 15, wherein said bottle is a blow molded, plastic bottle.

Claim 22 (previously presented): A bottle according to claim 1, wherein said vacuum panels are vertically elongated and disposed about the circumference of said side wall.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A bottle according to ~~claim 3~~, claim 1, wherein said discontinuities are located entirely over the central portion of an adjacent vacuum panel.

Claim 24 (new): A hollow plastic bottle which comprises:
a hollow body of thermoplastic material having a generally cylindrical side wall, an upper end with a dispensing opening therein, and a lower supporting base with an inwardly extending portion;
said side wall including a plurality of circumferentially spaced apart, vacuum panels and a plurality of elongated posts positioned between the panels, wherein each vacuum panel includes an inwardly offset peripheral portion which includes an outer perimeter and an inner perimeter, with the outer perimeter of said offset peripheral portion depressed further than the inner perimeter, and top and bottom elongated recessed cylindrical bands above and below said vacuum panels;
and wherein said bottom elongated band extends continuously around the circumference of said bottle, and wherein said top elongated band includes at least two spaced apart discontinuities comprising raised portions each of which interrupts the continuity of the top band.